

Off to New Bern

Penny couldn't believe what had just happened. Murder in the theater that she and Fernie had seen! Her heart was still racing. Caitlin was beside herself. She pulled out her traveling bag and started throwing clothes into it.

"Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Caitlin," said Maggie, "What are you doing?" Maggie took Caitlin's arm to stop her.

"We've got to go, don't you see Maggie? He knows Fernie and Pennyroyal saw who did it. Mr. Bones knows. If they catch him they'll have to testify, if they don't catch him he'll be comin' after them and after us, now we know."

"Just hold on a minute. Calm yourself. Let's think this out like we have the sense we were born with. Sure and he saw them but that don't mean we have to run away!"

"And he made out like he would cut our throats!" said Fernie. It was horrible!

"Well, maybe the best thing to do is sit tight here for a while. Why would a murderer come back to the scene of the crime?"

"To get rid of us, that's why," said Caitlin. She pointed to the girls. These are his only witnesses. I'm telling you it's dangerous to stay here, Maggie O'Donnell."

"So what do we do," said Maggie, "leave them on the street? Take them to the police so they can ask a lot of questions?"

Caitlin turned to the girls. "You two chillen keep your mouths closed, good and tight," She said, "or by God, we'll do just that. Leave you on the street for Mr. Bones to find you."

"No, no we can't do that," said Maggie. "We don't want anyone asking questions about what we was doing with these girls. Kidnapping Negro children and making them work will get us in big trouble with the Freedmen's Bureau and you know, dearie," she said, lowering her voice, "we haven't always been completely on the right side of the law. I say we stay here at least for a while."

That night while they were waiting for the women to finish their act, Penny and Fernie finally had a chance to talk in private. They were sitting on the floor in the dressing room. Penny pulled a woman's cotton stocking out of her pocket. She said, "This here's our stocking where I put our pennies to save so we can go somewhere on our own. I always keep it with me so I know where our money is."

"Home?" said Fernie.

"Well, maybe." Penny thought about Pa and about Miss Daylily. Where was home now anyway? There were a pitiful few pennies below the knot she had made in the stocking.

"Pen," said Fernie, "why can't we just go? Mr. Bones don't know where we live."

"We don't live there anymore, you know that." She stood up. "Come on. We got to

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